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STATE DOCUMENTS

March 12
Office of
Child Advocacy

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

COLUMBIA

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 75-6

WHEREAS, It has come to my attention that serious gaps and shortcomings now exist in state and private programs for the abused, neglected, abandoned and dependent children presently housed in both public and private foster homes and institutions in South Carolina; and

WHEREAS, the total number of these children in foster care in both public and private institutions now exceeds three thousand (3,000); and

WHEREAS, many of these children may have to spend their remaining childhoods in foster homes and institutions thereby being deprived of parental affection and guidance; and

WHEREAS, it is clearly established that the longer a child remains in a foster or institutional home the less likely he or she is to be adopted and placed in a permanent home; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the detrimental effect upon the child, these extended stays also create a substantial burden upon limited state resources; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina during the Session of 1974 recognized the necessity of action to alleviate this situation by passing three major acts designed to facilitate the placement of abused, abandoned, neglected and dependent children in permanent homes, to wit:

- (1) Act No. 993 (1974) by which provisions are made for continued medical payment benefits for adopted children who receive such benefits from the state prior to adoption.
- (2) Act No. 1170 (1974) by which provisions are made for the termination of parental rights of abandoned or abused children.
- (3) Act No. 1172 (1974) by which provisions are made for creation of a system of Children's Foster Care Review Boards which include the South Carolina Advisory Board and Local Boards in each judicial circuit.

WHEREAS, these Acts represent significant and substantial strides in the development of a sound program of placement in permanent homes for those children now living in foster and institutional homes; and

WHEREAS, as Chief Executive of the State of South Carolina, it is my duty to ensure full implementation of Act No. 993 (1974), Act No. 1170 (1974), and Act No. 1172 (1974); and

WHEREAS, the well-being of the abused, neglected, abandoned and dependent children of our state and wise utilization of state resources demand that effective action immediately be undertaken by this office to secure permanent homes for such children by return to their improved parents, by adoption, or by placement in permanent foster homes;

NOW, THEREFORE, under the authority vested in me by the Constitution and Laws of the State of South Carolina, it is hereby ordered as follows:

I. Organization and Funding

The Office of Child Advocacy shall:

- (a) Operate as a division within the Office of the Governor.
- (b) Report directly to the Governor or his designee.
- (c) Consist of a Director, to be named by the Governor, and such staff as may be necessary to carry out its responsibilities and duties to the children of this state.
- (d) Seek and utilize such public or private funds as may be available for carrying out its duties and responsibilities to the children of this state.


II. Duties and Responsibilities

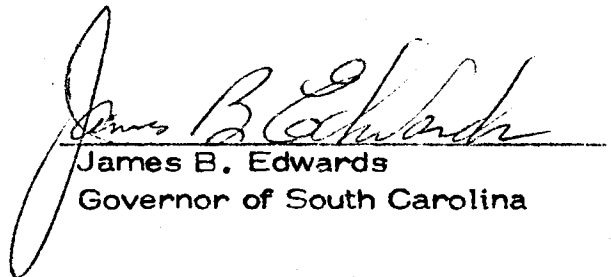
The Office of Child Advocacy shall:

- (a) Serve as ombudsman on behalf of the abused, neglected, abandoned, and dependent children of the State of South Carolina.
- (b) Give first priority in performance of its duties to those children now housed in foster and institutional homes.
- (c) Develop a planned and systematic program for placing such children in permanent homes.
- (d) Assist in the establishment and coordination of local Foster Care Review Boards and in the creation of policies and procedures for the South Carolina Advisory Board for Review of Foster Care of Children.
- (e) Help coordinate the activities of public and private child welfare agencies and institutions in order to enhance their effectiveness in placing children in permanent homes.
- (f) Encourage community and individual participation in programs and projects directed towards aiding the abused, neglected, abandoned and dependent children in our state.

- (g) Devise such other programs and undertake such other activities as may be necessary for carrying out the duties and responsibilities as set forth above.

Given under my hand and the Great Seal of the State of South Carolina at Columbia, South Carolina, this Twelfth day of March, in the year of our Lord One Thousand Nine Hundred and Seventy-Five and the Independence of the United States of America the One Hundred Ninety-Nine.




James B. Edwards
Governor of South Carolina


O. Frank Thornton
Secretary of State